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Wild Flowers.

Mrs. Frank Howard

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Wild Flowers

BY

MRS. FRANK HOWARD.

London and Newcastle-on-Tyne:
THE WALTER SCOTT PUBLISHING CO., LTD.
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1904.

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TO

MY CHILDREN.

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TO OUR LATE QUEEN.

ON HER DIAMOND JUBILEE.*

Oh, how shall we greet thee, Victoria our Ruler,
  Our faithful Protector, our Sovereign, our Friend?
The costliest gems in thy kingdom lack lustre,
  Compared with the wealth of the love which we tend.

Thy life-long devotion to principles holy
  Shines forth as the morning in rays of pure gold;
Thy womanly heart always ready to succour,
  In tender compassion, the poor and the old.

Thy youth, too soon mellowed and crushed with a sorrow
  Too sacred for words, too bitter for tears,
Alone—though a Queen—thou hast fought bravely onward,
  With duty thy guide through the vista of years.

* Written for and accepted by her Majesty Queen Victoria, on the occasion of her Diamond Jubilee, June 25th, 1897.

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Our eyes have not seen thee, but often, how often,
When thy soul has been riven with the griefs thou hast known,
With responsive outpouring the heart of thy people
In chords of true sympathy beat with thine own.

Thou art loved, truly loved, from the prince to the peasant—
Sixty years hast thou guarded the casket of peace;
Truth, justice, and mercy thy righteous endeavour,
And bright thy reward when thy mission shall cease.

With the fulness of hope we await the glad morning,
When, bursting with joy, all the nation shall ring;
Let the hills and the trees and the birds and the ocean,
Let the glad air be rent with the song that we sing.

Loud swell the anthem of joyful thanksgiving,
Love is the theme of the jubilant throng:
The heart-throbs of millions take up the grand chorus,
And mountain and valley are flooded with song.

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ON HER EIGHTIETH BIRTHDAY.

ONCE more does our nation lift up its glad voice,
  In grateful accord to Jehovah above,
For yet one more link in the chain of a life
  That responds to the pulse of a proud people's love.

Beloved Victoria, revered of our Isle,
  The four winds of heaven waft sweet wishes to-day,
Like incense arising, from millions of hearts,
  From land unto land where her sceptre has sway.

Thro' tumult and famine, in peace and in war,
  Ever upward and onward her motto has been.
Favoured child of a people as favoured to love
  As she to accept—wife, mother, friend, Queen.

May the eve of her life be one blissful repose,
  And her couch be illumined with grace from above;
May she, waiting the call of the Great King of Kings,
  Eternally bask in the light of his love.

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ON HER EIGHTY-FIRST BIRTHDAY.

We thank Thee, Lord, with all our hearts, amid the stress and strife,
That Thou another year has spared our loved Victoria's life;
That thro' each trying, varied path Thy guiding hand unseen
With tender and protecting care encompasseth our Queen.

We pray Thee that Thy sun may rise on many birthdays yet,
And on her pure and blameless life that sun will never set;
Her hand has swayed the sceptre, Thy love has ruled her heart;
Careful for all, she strives to fill a loving, faithful part.

Oh, speed the time when she may see our stricken land again
Restored to rest and confidence, and blessèd concord reign:
Stay Thou the sword of vengeance on Afric's golden shore;
May peace hold out her olive branch and war be seen no more.

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SOWING AND REAPING.

PART I.

"I HAVE laboured in vain," said the Vicar,
  As he mused at the close of the day,
Watching the flickering embers
  Silently smoulder away.

"I have brought no balm to the mourner,
  No solace or strength to the faint,
No food for the hungry and weary,
  No message of joy to the saints.

"And my heart feels o'erburdened with sorrow,
  Discouraged, despairing, and sad:
It is hard, when I gather no increase,
  To go on rejoicing and glad.

"Sometimes I am tempted to waver
  And think that the truths I have taught
Are nothing but phantoms and shadows—
  That I'm spending my efforts for naught.

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"Yet I know that my heart's deepest echoes
  Resound with a Saviour's love,
And in spite of the fears that perplex me
  I'm strengthened with grace from above.

"Shall I question the infinite wisdom,
  The unerring, fathomless skill
Of the great everlasting Jehovah
  Who leavens His word at His will?

"I will sow from the dawn to the evening,
  And water the ground with my tears;
And patiently wait till the reaper
  My sheaves to his granary bears.

"I will labour through mist and through shadow,
  And still on his promises live;
Paul must preach and Apollo must water,
  And God will the increase give.

"So, contented, that dawn I will herald,
  When Christ o'er all nations shall reign,
If I have but a share in the glory
  When He harvests His golden grain."

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Part II.

"I am willing to go, dearest mother,
His words—Oh, so tender and sweet!—
Have come like a balm to my spirit
And lighted the way for my feet.

"He has shown me the need of submission—
To bow 'neath the chastening rod,
And whispered sweet promises, falling
Like dew from the mountains of God.

"Every doubt is now chased from my bosom;
With peace, perfect peace, I can say,
Though I'm walking thro' death's lonely valley
My Jesus is leading the way.

"Thrice happy the man who is favoured
Christ's message of love to diffuse;
A chosen and well-trusted vessel,
Made meet for the Master's own use.

"Oh, if this, only this, be the trophy
Our Vicar will ever obtain,
I shall prove by my presence in glory,
His labours have not been in vain."

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LULLABY.

In thy little cradle nest,
  Sleep, my baby, sleep and rest!
Angels guard thy slumber sweet,
  Angels keep thy little feet;
He from whom all goodness flows
  Watch o'er thee till life shall close—
    Sleep, baby, sleep!

Happy may thy footsteps glide,
  Early morn and eventide;
At thy helm may virtue steer
  Thy frail bark, my baby dear;
All thy days be one sweet chime—
  Every hour a summer time—
    Sleep, baby, sleep!

FAME.

This, this is Fame—
  So using every minute
To leave this world—this glorious world—
  Better for living in it.

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BIRDS.

THOUGH woods around be richly clad
  In Spring's bright robe of green;
Though brooks may gaily sparkle through
  The valley's depth serene;
Though trees may sport their noble boughs,
  And flowers their brightest shade;
Though plants of richest excellence
  May deck the verdant glade;
The morning sun may rise and tint
  With glory all around;
Green fields by Nature's hand be decked,
  In beauty may abound—
Yet, still, without the singing birds
  The lovely glade and rill
Would be a waste of loneliness
  Which nought but song could fill.

IN MEMORIAM: J. H.

PEACEFULLY sleep, thy work below is ended,
  And God, thy loving Father, calls thee home,
A mansion in the realms above awaits thee,
  And Jesus, in His mercy, bids thee come.

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Thy life has been a weary life of suffering,
  And tho' we miss thee we will not repine;
His all-sufficient grace our hearts will succour
  Until we see thee robed in light divine.

All radiant with the glory of thy Saviour,
  And numbered with the happy and the blest,
Where peaceful rivers thro' green fields are flowing,
  And weary pilgrims find eternal rest.

Unfettered from the clay, thy parting spirit
  Shall rise triumphant over death and sin;
The strife is finished and thy journey ended—
  Heaven's gates are open, thou may'st enter in.

Why should we shrink from death's dread visitation?
  The yawning grave can only hold its own;
The spirit wings its flight to God, Who gave it,
  Eternally to worship at His throne.

A little while and we shall meet our loved ones
  In those blest regions with the saints on high;
Clothed in garments of the purest whiteness,
  Where tears are wiped from every eye.

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RESCUED.

COLD, ragged and hungry, and weary and sad,
On the bridge of a river sat a half-frozen lad;
His poor little features looked wan, pinched and old,
And his thin, wasted limbs fairly shivered with cold.
All drenched to the skin, he tried, but in vain,
To shelter himself from the fierce, blinding rain:
With a desolate shake of his half-bended head,
Very feebly he murmured, "I wish I was dead!
It does seem so hard to be living on here,
When hardly a crust ever comes to my share;
I'm dying for food, and it's wicked to steal—
P'raps the better-dressed people think poor boys can't feel.
It must be the clothes makes the difference, I've thought;
It's 'cause we are ragged they think we've no heart.
Now, those boys in that carriage—they're looking, I see—
I wonder how either would like to be me!
I wonder how they would like, day after day,
To have no other food but what folks throw away!
Change those warm clothes of theirs for these tatters of mine,
And then see if they wouldn't murmur and pine!
The man at the mission says God will provide:
Where is God, I wonder? Would He hear if I cried
Out as loud as I could, and complained I was cold?
P'raps He knows all about it, but waits to be told.

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I haven't a father or mother to care;
There's nothing to live for, and death I don't fear.
I feel in the way as the people pass by—
They've no time to notice a half-frozen boy.
I should never be missed if, when all things are still,
I crept quietly down—and, I half think I will—
Just lay myself down in the water's cold bed:
In a few minutes then, poor Joe 'ud be dead.
Only a bubble, and the stream would flow on,
Just as hard and as unkind as the pitiless throng.
Then, if all things are true, as I've heard of afore,
I shall be where they hunger and thirst never more:
Where there's never no tears, and there's never no pain!
Ay—won't it be nice—never hungry again!"
Just then a warm hand on his shoulder was laid:
He looked up with a start, half glad, half afraid,
And the soft, kindly voice set his pulses astir
As it lifted his soul from the brink of despair.
"My child," said the stranger, "how lonely you seem."
Poor Joe for a moment felt sure 'twas a dream,
And scarcely could trust his own voice to be heard
Lest the other should vanish, so he spake not a word,
But, timid and pitiful, raised his eyes up
As he clung to the last shattered remnants of hope.
"What makes you sit here, with the rain falling fast,
And your limbs all exposed to this keen, piercing blast?"
And "Have you no father or mother?" he said.
"No; father's at sea, and mother is dead."

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"Then look in my face. Can you trust me and come
To a warm, cosy fire, a house, and a home?
Your Heavenly Father has led me aright,
In His love He has found you a shelter to-night.
He saw you were desolate, homeless, and sad,
And sent me to rescue you, poor little lad."
The boy's wand'ring senses began to revive,
And he felt—oh, so thankful!—he yet was alive;
But a few moments later and poor little Joe
Would have buried himself in the waters below.
Now life's flickering embers were fanned to a flame,
And beautiful hope gave him comfort again.
"I just think I would trust!" he eagerly cried;
"And what if I don't? I have nothing beside.
Do you think I would venture to lose such a treat?
I'd go anywhere with you for something to eat.
I don't mind the rain and the cold, but I feel
Almost dying with hunger, and so tempted to steal:
But 'twas wicked and wrong, the mission man said,
So I've tried ever since to be honest instead.
He said he was certain, whatever betide,
If we still went on trusting, the Lord 'ud provide.
But it seemed so long coming, I'd almost forgot
To believe as he ever meant me in the lot;
An' it's all coming true, I think I can see!
The Lord will provide means: He sent you to me—
An', sir, if you'll take me I'll promise the Lord
I'll try to be good, an' I'll work, oh, so hard!"

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"Take hold of my hand, then keep close by my side,"
With loving assurance, the stranger replied.
"We shall not be long if you think you can walk,
And then, after supper, we'll have a good talk."
"When you get to the light, sir, you'll find I'm too bad
To walk by your side; but I'd be just as glad
To keep close behind, then the people won't see;
But they'll stare if they notice you walking with me."
"Come along, little fellow, as quick as you can:
It isn't your clothes that I think of, my man.
Christ, the Good Shepherd, to shield them from harm,
Would carry His grief-stricken lambs with His arm;
Then how can it matter what people may say
If His footsteps I follow, His word I obey?"

Hand in hand went the pair, and though dreary the night,
Joe was certain he'd ne'er seen the lamps shine so bright;
Though the rain was still falling, and piercing the wind,
Hope had lighted a fire, warming heart, soul, and mind,
As he trudged bravely on, leaving street after street,
With no thought of his rags or his half-frozen feet.
The prospect of supper was ample reward
For all his past sufferings, so nobly endured.
As they passed the great shops he felt ever so grand,
Reassured now and then by a squeeze of the hand;
From the din of the town, down a long winding lane,
Till they reached the great gates, with lamps all aflame:
And oh, the delightful, the glorious surprise!

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For a moment Joe scarcely believed his own eyes.
A house like a mansion, with windows alight;
With steps to go up, and a knocker so bright—
Was it really all true, was he perfectly sure
He was going inside, he—so ragged and poor?
Ah yes, little Joe, there are hearts full of love,
Seeking only the will of their Father above;
True virtue and goodness their footsteps attend,
Enriching the world with the brightness they lend.
"It's me, safe enough: let's see if I'll flinch,"
Said he, giving his leg an unmerciful pinch.
"Oh, it's right," he soliloquised, "it is Poor Joe—
But oh, what a change from two hours ago!
If I wasn't quite certain 'bout being awake,
I should think I was dreaming, and find my mistake.
This is mor'n I ever could think of or wish;
I don't believe heaven is better 'un this!
Only fancy—me—sleepin' upon a real bed!
Ay, couldn't I shout! I could stand on my head!"
"What, wondering still?" said his good-natured guide,
As he placed a nice bowl of warm milk by his side.
"Sit down by the fire, get this supper, my lad,
Then tell me your name—tell me all, good and bad."
Joe's heart was too full, but bravely he tried
To keep back the tears that refused to be dried:
"Oh please, sir; oh please, sir," at length sobbed the boy,
"I think I'd be right if I had a good cry;

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I can't say in words what I'm feeling just there"—
And he laid his weak hand on his breast thin and bare,
And the long pent-up feelings found solace in tears,
Moist'ning softly the soil, dry and withered for years.
"Now, sir, if you like," through his tears, he began,
"I'll tell you my name, and as much as I can
Of the life that I've lived since father's been gone,
And since mother's been dead—and I've been all alone.
My name is Joe Saunders; I think it must be
Two years since father's been gone. Let me see—
I know it was winter and perishing cold,
An' I know mother fainted when she was told.
I thought she was dead—wondered what I should do—
I allus loved mother the best of the two.
My father was right till he took to the drink,
Then mother grieved sadly—that killed her, I think.
She didn't live long after father had gone,
But long afore then had her illness begun:
She lay still for days, and kept on getting worse,
An' we hadn't no money for doctor or nurse;
But the woman as lived on the floor down below
Used to come up and sit for a short hour or so;
She often brought mother a cup of warm tea—
Then when she was gone mother 'd give it to me.
She lingered for weeks, an' her cough got so bad,
But I think all she thought of was leaving her lad.
'My boy,' she would say when she'd had an attack,
'I do wish your father would take an' come back.

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I can't seem to rest night or day for the thought
Of how you'll get on—to what straits you'll be brought.
P'raps I might have done more to brighten our way,
But I've always found bread for you, let come what may.
And now you'll have no one to look to and love,
My poor little Joseph,' she whispered, and strove
To keep back the tears fast falling down her cheek.
'Twas awful to see how it hurt her to speak.
I can't bear to think of the night that she died;
I kept wide awake and lay down by her side.
An' well I remember, 'twas just about dawn,
I heard a deep breath and a pitiful moan;
I felt her cold hand passing over my face,
An' there I lay frightened to move from the place
Till I roused myself up. 'It's mother,' I thought;
'Why need I be frightened, she'll do me no hurt.'
Then I rose, struck a light, and looked over the bed,
And I thought for a moment my mother was dead;
But she opened her eyes, gave one little sigh,
And the last words she uttered were 'Kiss me, my boy.'
What I've suffered since then, sir, I hardly can tell;
Now and then I've been lucky, and fared pretty well.
When I made up my mind not to steal any more,
The lads wouldn't help me as helped me afore;
So I ran from the place as we lived in for years—
I couldn't put up with their taunts an' their jeers.
I was nearly done up when you saw me to-night;
It's been nearly three days since I've tasted a bite."

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"My boy," said his friend, "of this be assured—
I've traced in your story the hand of the Lord.
Take courage, believe that, whatever befalls,
He notices even a sparrow that falls;
And while your glad praise to His footstool ascends,
Give your heart in return for the blessings He sends.
I look in your face, and my heart seems aglow
With the pleasure God gives me in helping you so.
Let the years of your life to His service be given:
'Twill help you to live, and will fit you for heaven!"

So we'll leave little Joe in his warm, cosy bed
To dream golden dreams, for his troubles are fled;
And snatched thus from the brink of an awful abyss,
Time only shall echo his heart's gratefulness.
These, these are the deeds that are worthy renown!
Wreaths of love are their honours, and virtue their crown;
Silent missions of mercy, blessed work for the Lord—
Not a cup of cold water shall lose its reward.

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OFF YARMOUTH IN THE HERRING SEASON.

YARMOUTH, Yarmouth, breezy Yarmouth!
  Full of health and herring too;
Herring, herring, silver herring!
  From the waters fresh and blue.

All alive O! all alive O!
  All alive the fisher folks—
Brown and ruddy, stalwart, sturdy—
  Bring your baskets, crack your jokes.

Ocean giants, proud and princely;
  Ocean lovers, stout and strong;
Good old friends of Father Neptune,
  Bring your stately boats along.

Bring your wealth from ocean warehouse,
  Crowd the markets with your store;
Plenty, plenty—always plenty—
  Plenty here and plenty more.

Without you, brave-hearted fellows,
  Where would be our breakfast dish?
Where would be our toothsome haddock,
  Kipper, bloater—what you wish?

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Whilst amid the lone night watches
  We are wrapt in peaceful sleep—
You are toiling, toiling, toiling
  Through the dangers of the deep.

Hurry, skurry; hurry, skurry!
  Scotland's girls and Scotland's boys,
Knitting, laughing, joking, chaffing,
  Full of racket, full of noise.

Now the lively, grand old harbour
  Teems with life and jest and shout;
Tiny boats and graceful vessels
  Sailing in and steaming out.

Ting-a-ling, O! Ting-a-ling, O!
  Now the busy auctioneer,
Brimming full of business banter,
  Brings the eager buyers near.

"One, I'm offered! two, I'm offered!
  Three, I'm offered!" still he cries;
Takes his client's silent bidding
  Through the corners of his eyes.

Helter skelter, sales are over;
  Helter skelter, there he goes—
Crowding, pushing, bobbies bawling—
  "Look up, missus, mind your toes."

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Modest little Mister Herring,
  You're a most important chap;
What would Yarmouth do without you
  Flinging gold to fortune's lap?

If you only knew your value,
  What would people do with you?
Not a vessel in the harbour
  Is there built would bring you through.

Splendid, shimmering, shiny morsels—
  Pictures in yourselves complete,
Blessings from the fruitful waters,
  Nature's gift for labour sweet.

Yarmouth, Yarmouth, lovely Yarmouth!
  Always ancient, always new:
Asked for Yarmouth, I spell herring—
  Yarmouth still for herring too.

TO MY CHILD.

Hopeful dreams thou art dreaming of visions before thee,
  Thy future looks golden and rosy to thee;
Youth, lovely youth, with exalted ambitions,
  Sets sail decked with flowers on an emerald sea.

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The warm glow of health thro' thy pulses is beating,
  And fancy is weaving her castles of air;
Untainted and pure from the world's subtle brooding,
  Oh, would I could keep thee from tasting its care!

Oh, how I would shield thee from storms that await thee
  Ere thy small craft is launched on life's turbulent tide;
Too soon wilt thou find, love, thy garlands have withered,
  And morning's bright blossoms have faded and died.

For thy part thou must take in this world's mystic drama,
  And each task that is given thee—learn it with love!
This life is our school, and its great education
  Is only to fit us for heaven above.

A MORNING TRAGEDY.

One morning, e'er the sun had scaled
  The shadows of the night,
There stood within my chamber,
  In the dusky morning light,
A hideous blackened monster
  Before my trembling sight.

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He fixed on me his piercing eyes,
  With wild and glassy glare;
I stood before him motionless,
  In mute and blank despair,
Fearing to move, or breathe, or stir—
  I was a fixture there.

With demon stare his gleaming eyes
  Weird glances at me flung,
His false teeth glittered in the gloom,
  And just revealed his tongue;
While from this imp of ebony
  What gruesome garments hung!

Apollyon-like he paced the floor,
  Then nearer, and more near—
I felt his breath upon my face,
  I saw his loathsome leer;
My hair stood up, my body shook
  All paralysed with fear!

His tainted breath was reeking with
  The fires that do not kill,
Unwholesome things, like spiral springs,
  Of form and odour ill,
With fumes of reeking nastiness,
  My chamber seemed to fill.

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This foul thing turned and hissed aloud
  Some words I failed to catch—
One moment, and I could be gone,
  The door was off the latch;
But no, my demon darted forth,
  And with a mighty snatch,

He wrenched the handle from my grasp,
  Then locked my casement door,
And gliding to the fireplace,
  Knelt down upon the floor;
A grim and ghastly spectre as
  He knelt upon the floor.

My tongue was loosed: "Thou wretch," I cried,
  "Thou fiend in human form,
Stand on thy feet, thou demon dark,
  Thou canst do me no harm;
I'll rise above thy impish might,
  And all my fears disarm.

"I've quailed before thy fiendish fire,
  I've trembled at thy sight,
But now, begone timidity!
  I'll tackle thee outright—
And thou canst call Beelzebub
  To aid thee in the fight!

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"Thy blackened visage filled my soul
  With fears that matched thy skin,
And in my helplessness I shrank
  From feelings pent within;
And almost wished the earth would gape
  And let my body in.

"What business hast thou here?" I asked,
  "And what thy vile intent?
Stand up, thou monster, on thy feet
  And let me know thy bent—
Thou image of the foulest dye,
  Thou fiend of discontent!"

A grin spread o'er his long, lank jaws,
  He raised a scoffing bawl,
Then snatched a weapon from the ground
  And pushed it through the wall.
"Great heavens!" I gasped, "this is the time
  Upon the gods to call!"

A circlet of divided reeds
  He waved as if in fright,
Then, with a gesture quick as thought,
  He thrust it out of sight,
And with a mumbling, grumbling sound,
  It vanished from the light.

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Then upright on his feet he stood,
And facing me, he said
(I thought I'd tell you 'twas his feet
He stood on—not his head):
"This chimney's bin the wusstest 'un
I think I've ever 'ed."

THE SPRING VIOLET.

THRICE welcome, sweetest violet,
True harbinger of spring;
Well may thy nodding, scented head
To us bright visions bring!

And tell us of the happy time
Of glad returning days,
When birds upon the budding trees
Shall sing their sweetest lays:

And flowers with all their fragrance soft,
In field and garden fair,
Shall ope their heads and welcome in
The glorious Springtide air:

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When children, roaming hand in hand,
  Shall daily laugh and sing,
And welcome with ecstatic joy
  The glad return of spring.

ON A PEN PICKED UP AT OXFORD.

I PICKED up a pen as I strolled one day
  Through the streets of the city of learning—
'Twas the quill of a gander, a duck, or a goose,
  And it set all my interest burning.

I held it aloft in the balmy air
  (You may think I was foolish to do it),
But I thought what a prize I was holding there,
  As I thus to myself did review it.

It may be the pen of some high-born lord,
  Whose name is as old as the ages,
Or it may be the pen of some noble youth
  Who's destined to grace England's pages:

Who, now in the prime of youth's spring-time,
  In the morn of his young life's story,
Is making a name that will live for aye
  In the annals of fame and glory.

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It may be the pen of a man among men,
  Who shall speak with a voice of thunder,
And rule in the land with a Cromwell's hand,
  And burst all her bonds asunder.

Then I laughed to myself as I flung it away—
  For why should I think any longer?
It may be but the pen of a butcher-boy,
  Or the quill of a costermonger.

A POET'S FAMILY DIFFICULTIES.

BLIGHTED FAITH.

UNDERNEATH a shady willow,
  Near a brooklet's laughing way,
Sat two lovers, chatting gaily—
  ("Now, my darling, run and play.")

Fair and guileless as the breezes
  Was that maiden's trusting heart,
Innocent in youth's bright morning—
  ("Bless the youngster, take a tart!")

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Not one trace of care or sorrow
  E'er had sullied her fair brow,
Like a lake of silver smoothness—
  ("Go and see the big bow-wow.")

As she listens to his accents,
  How her young heart swells with joy,
Sweetly murmuring gentle whisperings—
  ("Stop that noise, you naughty boy!")

Yes, I love thee, and thee only,
  And before next setting sun
Other ears will hear him pleading—
  ("Here's a penny, fetch a bun.")

Oh, the mine of tender passion,
  Blunted by base-hearted tricks,
Lost to those whose true devotion—
  ("Mary, give the child his bricks.")

Now in mournful desolation
  Does the maiden sigh and weep,
Dwarfed anticipations echo—
  ("Thank the gods, the child's asleep!")

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SPRING.

"HAIL! beauteous Spring," the poet cried,
"Accept our glad refrain"—
(And in the field the donkey brayed:
A certain sign of rain).

"A thousand welcomes, rosy maid,
Upon thy breezes float"—
(A shudder through his spare ribs ran:
He missed his overcoat).

"The bloom upon the hedgerows wild,
The buds upon the trees,
The daisy in the meadow peeps"—
(And here he paused to sneeze).

"The timid violet's perfumed breath,
The cowslip's bells of gold"—
(And stopping short, he found he'd caught
An influenza cold).

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RETROSPECTION.

'Tis eventide, and low behind the western hills
The glorious sunlight fades; the day is done,
Peaceful the evening, silent and still—
Peace till the morning tide, soft shadows toll.
Round the great wheel whose spokes unceasing grind,
Unerringly and just, all words, all deeds,
Sifting the good from ill, the chaff from grain.
Why sleep we all? And only when
The wounds of time chafe us to rude awakening,
Then dimly breaks the dawn of truth to our
Misguided sense, and we as children,
Crying in the night, await the hand that
Soothes, the voice that whispers low.
Be still, the morning comes; then light divine!
Lie down and rest, submission comfort brings.
'Tis eventide, and on the western skies the clouds
In glorious splendour, shape, with richest tint,
Now tall baronial pile, now mountain peak,
Now glades of burnished gold, now chasm's gorge,
Forest of fire, melting lake of blue,
With shifting sheen of emerald's lovely tint,
Now purple as the royal robe of king,
Now grey as gloomy grief disconsolate;
Like ringdove's wing, with soft uncertain fold,

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In billowy light the gentle shadows play;
Now Alpine summit, silver-tipped and kissed
With dainty topaz, opal, and amethyst.
Oh, changing scene, for see! like floods of liquid light,
Islands of green now melt to plains of ruby hue:
From floating shades of colours brightest gleam,
This glorious picture ends in twilight grey.
Castles of air! Our life is but a rosy sunset eve;
Restless for fame our vain ambition craves,
Only to find, like shadows in the cloud,
Gold turn to dust and hopes take wings and fly.
Experience, with sable wings and soft subdued approach,
Holds out her hands in kind and tender charge:
Do ye no evil, guard with zealous care
Thine inmost thoughts, and keep thy conscience clear.
Thy little cells of pride, deceit, and lust,
Purge and destroy, the lash of discipline its lesson prove—
Whom the gods love they chasten, sparing none,
But out of deepest darkness light shall come,
As storms to seas; the waters of distress thy soul shall cleanse.
Only give me thy hand, shun discontent;
Beneath thy feet crush cloudy unbelief.
I bid thee lean on me! Yea, I entreat.
Straight is the line but strong and fierce the tyranny of self,
Hurling to right and left her subtle shafts;
Craving with lustful appetite and wanton way

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The joys that will not satisfy her cup to fill.
Sweet eventide, rest from the many cares of one short day,
Emblem of everlasting peace or strife renewed;
We reap that we have sown, nor can we hope to glean
Figs from the thistle-down, or tares for golden grain!
Sweet eventide—softly the cloak of night falls o'er the land,
And on the dark blue ocean silver moonbeams play,
Silent and still, save for the wailing cry,
Like a phantom dirge, from the watchful sea-bird's throat;
The stars above, like listening angels sweet, their vigil keep;
And o'er the pulse of Nature comes the lull of calm repose;
Lights from the latticed window, like fairy shadows, flit,
Wafting their faint adieu to this the dying day!
To one sure goal we hasten; let our steps be placed upon
The upward path of truth or downward turned;
Evil or good we fall, or steadfast stand,
And perfect retribution meets us all.
The Judge of All, with just, unerring wisdom, holds the scales,
Favouring none, but deals to each their sure and merited reward.
Tho' great the tribulation, and bitter be the strife,
Will not the God of all the earth and seas do right?
Blest recompense! Let duty call
Thro' surging torrents fierce and wild,
Flashed through tempestuous floods! On, bravely on!

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Sweeter the evening's calm for morning storms;
Safe, safe our barque when duty guides the helm!
Rest comes at last, as on the heels of winter trips eager
spring,
Nursing the buds of beauty into blossoming;
Thankfully we welcome the twilight grey—
From out the dusk of evening
Unfolds the certain day!

FAITHFUL.

Oh, let me hear thee breathe
One loving sigh;
Darkness is light to me
When thou art nigh;
Tho' on life's storm-tossed sea,
Dangers encompass thee,
Still, still I'll always be
Close to thy side.

Thy cherished smile can cheer
All the day long,
Turning the night to day,
Sorrow to song;

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True as the stars above,
  Constant till death I'll prove,
My light, my life, my love,
  Faithful to thee.

SUMMER.

The little birds are singing
  Among the leafy trees,
Their cheery voices ringing
  Through summer's balmy breeze;
The air is richly scented
  With flowers of varied hue,
The hedges round are tinted
  With golden blossoms too.

The woodbine gaily twining
  Around the sweet wild rose,
'Mid early dewdrops shining,
  Refreshing perfume throws;
The mower's scythe is laying
  The grass and wild flowers low,
And merrily are singing
  The mowers as they mow.

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And when the sun is setting,
  And gentle breezes blow,
Their hours of toil forgetting,
  The village maidens go
Into the scented meadows,
  With hearts so light and gay,
Amid the evening shadows,
  To romp among the hay.

How every scene surrounding,
  In summer's happy days,
By God's good gift abounding,
  Seems high our hearts to raise!
In thankful praise addressing
  The Lord who dwells on high,
The fount of every blessing,
  The source of every joy.

ON THE DEATH OF A CHILD.

TO MY FRIEND, MRS. C——.

Not dead, but gone before!
To wait for me upon the heavenly shore,
A star to cheer my lonely way
Till night shall change to cloudless day.

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I would not have thee back,
Thy little feet to tread life's thorny track,
Thy way to fight thro' sin and strife,
Where only toil and care are rife.

Often my weary heart
Sighs to be near thee, never more to part;
I long to hear thy heavenly song
And see thee in the ransomed throng.

And in the silent hours
Methinks I see thee in those beauteous bowers,
Roaming with Christ in that fair land,
And angel spirits hand in hand.

Oh, Christ the Comforter!
Grant me thy grace to suffer and endure;
Strengthened by Thee, the cross Thou'st given
Shall prove a link 'twixt me and heaven.

TRUSTING, ALWAYS TRUSTING.

I FOLLOW where Thou leadest,
In darkness and in light,
And say, "Thy will, O Father!"
Tho' tear-drops dim my sight.

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I stumble in my blindness,
  Falter, and cannot stand;
Oh, keep me ever, keep me,
  With Thy protecting hand.

To question is to doubt Thee,
  Dishonouring Thy name,
The Great and Everlasting,
  Eternally the same.

Never the hour of triumph
  Without the hour of strife;
Never the hour of resting
  Without the toils of life.

Never the peace from suffering
  Without the touch of pain;
Brighter the gleams of sunshine
  After the freshening rain.

Make me Thy perfect image,
  Temper my will to Thine;
As chip by chip the sculptor
  Chisels a form divine.

High as the highest heaven,
  Deep as the boundless sea,
Immeasurable destinies
  Cement my soul to Thee.

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Soul of Thy Soul, Jehovah,
  The apple of Thine eye:
Thou lovest, carest, knowest—
  Thy name I'll glorify.

I'll trust Thee in my sorrows,
  Thankful for every touch,
Knowing the cup Thou fillest
  Holds not one drop too much.

Accepting with submission,
  Kissing the chastening rod,
Dark before dawn and daylight—
  Straight are Thy paths, O God!

A DYING GIRL'S DREAM.

Come nearer, dear mother, and sit by my side
  And let your hand rest in my own,
While I tell you the vision I had in the night—
  'Twill comfort you when I am gone.

I thought I was in such a beautiful place,
  More lovely than I can express:
'Twas a garden so fair, and the flowers blooming there
  A fragrance most sweet did possess.

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And as I looked round and beheld with delight
  These bowers with flowerets rare,
Admiring their beauty so dazzlingly bright,
  I wished I could always be there:

When some one addressed me in words such as these:
  "My child, before long thou shalt come
To this place where thy spirit is thirsting to dwell,
  And make it for ever thy home.

"Thou hast been too impatient to come, but e'er long
  Thy work will be finished below;
A little while longer thy cross thou must bear,
  Then fulness of joy shalt thou know."

And, mother, His voice was so lovingly sweet,
  His face looked to me so divine;
I know it was Jesus who spoke to me then,
  And, mother, I know He is mine.

Just raise me a little; once more let me feel
  Your warm breath kissing my cheek;
The wealth of your tenderness full well I know
  No language is able to speak.

My strength is fast fading, I feel I must go,
  For the heavenly portals I see,
And there 'mid the blossoms I saw in my dream,
  My Jesus is waiting for me.

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Do not grieve, mother dear, when I leave this cold
earth—
'Twill be to be happy above,
Where, clothed in the spotless white robe of the saints
For ever I'll live in His love.

TO WINNIE.

BEAUTIFUL, bounding, bright, bonny Winnie!
Curls like the sunshine, cheeks like the rose—
Tripping and skipping and dancing with gladness,
Light as the zephyr the summer wind blows.

Mischievous, merry, mirth-loving Winnie!
Tauntingly teasing, coy little miss—
Tiny white teeth in their setting of coral—
Sweet, pouting lips, always ready to kiss:

Beaming eyes, blue as the bells in the woodland,
Sparkling with fun, brimming over with glee—
Saucy round dimples, on chubby cheeks playing—
Small, twinkling maiden, of summers but three.

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Sweet crumpled bundle of laces and muslin,
  Sun-bonnet tipped on sunshiny curls;
Laughing and toying in frolicsome fancies—
  Winnie, the dearest of dear little girls!

Blithesome and fairylike, loving and lovely;
  Now chasing poor pussy, now playing bo-peep—
Pleasing and roguish and romping young Winnie
  Only is quiet in dreamland asleep.

MY LOVE.

When the sun is slowly setting close behind the western hill,
And twilight's purple mantle folds the daylight to her breast,
When the busy hum of song-birds is once more hushed and still,
And the children's weary voices are at rest—

There's a pathway near the woodland, 'neath a sturdy old oak-tree,
Where a dainty maiden lingers, with true love-light in her eyes,

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And for me, for me she's waiting—oh, my heart beats
happily!
She's the treasure, she's the jewel that I prize!

Richer, rarer than the ruby, dearer far than gold to own,
Her heart's a mine of tenderness, a fount of purity;
I would not change my darling for a queen that wears a
crown—
She's all the world, my only love to me!

CHILDHOOD.

SWEET dream of my childhood, all joyous and free,
Every pulse in my being vibrates still with thee!

Oh, beautiful childhood, beautiful hopes,
With flowers at our feet and wreaths for our ropes!

Dear home of my childhood, where aye in her place,
My fond mother ruled with a womanly grace.

And I hear the soft words, as my father would pray
God's blessing to rest on the deeds of the day,

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Bringing balm to my soul, like an angel's refrain—
And in mind I am there in my old home again.

I see the old rose-bush again and again
Peeping slyly and sweet thro' the old window-pane;

The great spreading lilac each year as before
Bloomed in graceful profusion around the front door.

How we danced with delight, in those innocent days,
If we carried a bunch of its coveted sprays!

Golden days, when to sunset from dawning of day
I merrily sported the glad hours away!

The fields I have rambled at breaking of morn—
All crimson with poppies and dancing with corn!

The old rustic bushes, a-nigh the green copse,
Where my school-mates and I played at houses and shops.

How often, how often, when coming from school,
Have we raced with each other to Wilcox's Pool!

And we knelt on its borders, each betting a pin,
We would count all the rings as the stone was thrown in!

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And the small, frightened minnows, not liking the fun,
Would dodge to the reeds till the rebels were gone.

Then the green elder hedge where the girls and the boys
Used to vie with each other in racket and noise!

How the branches we'd beat, and how eagerly chase
The poor, timid silver-winged moth from its place!

The old village well, from whose depths all may drink,
Where you go down two steps to the clear water's brink:

Full many a time have I stood on that shelf,
While Nature's own mirror has shown me myself.

Oh, care-charming childhood still bear on thy wings
The restful repose which thy memory brings!

In the days of our childhood, how soon the clouds pass,
And we view all our prospects through rose-tinted glass.

Sweet days of our childhood! Too soon are ye fled,
As the flow'rs, once the fairest, lie faded and dead.

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CHARACTERS.

WHAT a curious mixture of people there is
  In this curious world that we live in!
Curious people with curious names,
Curious children and curious dames,
  And men of most curious breeding;
People of every distinction and size,
Some whom we love and some we despise,
  Take a part in this world's proceedings.

People who grumble and people who don't,
People who travel and people who won't,
  And people single and married;
People who wouldn't and people who would,
People who wouldn't get wed if they could—
  Because their first love has miscarried.

People dirty, people clean,
People fat, and people lean,
  Of different shapes and features;
People short and people tall,
People big and people small—
  Most interesting creatures.

People good and people bad,
People merry, people sad,
  And people strange and comical;

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People high and people low,
People fast and people slow,
  Precise or economical.

People weak and people strong,
People right and people wrong,
  And people plain and pretty;
People dark and people fair,
People common, people rare,
  And people dull and witty.

People thin and people thick,
People slow, and people quick,
  And people queer and crazy;
People full of brag and boast,
People prim and people most
  Abominably lazy.

People deaf and people blind,
People cruel, people kind,
  And people proud and haughty;
People mean and people great,
People crooked, people straight,
  And people nice and naughty.

And when we remember our curious tastes,
  Our fickle and change-loving natures,
We see with what wisdom life's programme's arranged
  To suit such incongruous creatures!

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THE VILLAGE PUMP.

I'VE weathered the storms of a number of years,
  I've seen many changes about me,
And though I'm not handsome, I've wondered full oft
  How the village would manage without me.

By night and by day I am always the same,
  In winter as well as in summer;
My cool crystal draughts make me welcome to all,
  And my arm is outstretched to each comer.

The frolicsome children coming from school
  Gather round me with innocent prattle,
And I hear, without asking, day after day,
  Every fresh bit of gossip and tattle.

I listen to tales that I know are untrue—
  Though I haven't a tongue to deny it,
And I think if I had, my discretion would bid
  Me to show my good sense and keep quiet.

I know when the husbands are good to their wives,
  To my ear all the gossip is carried;
I can tell you when Mary and John were engaged,
  And the day they are going to be married.

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Oh, many a time in the pale moonshine
  I have listened to sweet words spoken:
And the sweetest of words, the strongest of vows,
  Like their pitchers, all made to be broken.

In the hush of the night, when I am standing alone,
  With plenty of time for reflection,
I weigh over things that I've heard, and I think
  Folk are still very far from perfection!

CHEATED.

THERE's a dainty little chamber and a dainty little couch,
Where a dainty head is resting on pillows soft as down,
And a pair of dainty slippers peep beneath the ample folds
Of a dainty little maiden's very dainty little gown;
Her dainty book has fallen from her dainty little hand,
And the god of sleep has carried her away to slumberland.

Now, with step too soft to waken, see a gallant lightly trip—
"Oh, I'll steal a kiss," he whispers, "from her dainty little lips!"

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Here's another picture for you of a disappointed swain;
The nectar of those kisses he has coveted in vain,
For instead of seventeen summers and a knowing little elf,
She's a maid of sixty winters, musty, crusty on the shelf.

SHARPS AND FLATS.

"Come, walk with me, my pretty maid,
This evening after tea;
Your graceful form and winning face
Have captivated me.

"I've lived for nearly forty years
And never been in love,
For up to now I've never seen
A maiden I approve.

"But now I feel my bosom throb
At just a sight of you;
You'll let me take you for a stroll?—
My pretty darling, do."

The night was dark, the silvery moon
Had gone to look for Mars;
The clouds, like curtains, draped the sky,
And quite shut out the stars.

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The happy couple stay'd awhile
  And listen'd to the roar
Of little silvery cataracts
  That hurried down the moor.

"My love," he fondly whispered,
  As he gently squeezed her hand,
"You're silence after all I've said
  I cannot understand.

"The name of Brown's not classical—
  Won't you take mine instead?"
"Thanks awfully, but I can't do that,
  I'm married, sir," she said.

A RIVER EXCURSION.

(*Written at the age of sixteen.*)

A PARTY gay,
  One summer day,
Determined to explore—
  They from the town
  Had all come down
Only the day before;

Digitized by Google

Good Mrs. B.,
And Phœbe T.,
And Jim's big sister, Polly,
And all the rest,
With laugh and jest,
Determined to be jolly!

For miles around
There can't be found
(Tho' age has turned them shabby)
Such ruins grand
In all the land
As famous Builder's Abbey.

Where monk so bold,
In days of old,
And knight of ancient story
Were left to quaff
Their wine and laugh
In unmolested glory,

With joyous shout,
And revel rout,
And merry beaming faces—
Now birds and bones
And sticks and stones
Do occupy their places.

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This place is found
On lovely ground,
By Severn's limpid stream,
And hither folk,
From labour's yoke
To gain a respite, teem.

Our party gay,
That summer day,
Had come from Birmingham;
Hampers galore,
With goodly store,
They had not failed to cram.

With spirits light,
And faces bright,
Sweet smiles on all their features,
They looked in tune,
With sunny June,
These nine good-tempered creatures!

O'er field and fen,
Thro' shady glen,
They tripp'd and never tired,
Until they got
Down to the spot
Where boats were to be hired.

Digitized by Google

"Boat, boat, ahoy!"
Cried Jim Molloy,
With voice so gay and merry;
"Boat, boat, ahoy!
Quick, quick, my boy!
Come row us o'er the ferry."

Then saucy Tom
Did quickly come,
His laughing eyes a-twinkle;
He seemed to see
The fun there'd be,
And prophesied a sprinkle.

"Good morning, sir,
And ladies fair,
I hope you're well and hearty;
Ah! well-a-day,
I'm bound to say,
You look a jolly party!

"Step in, fair maid,
Don't be afraid,
Nor heed the boat a-rocking;
Oh, never mind
If those behind
Can see your pretty stocking!"

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With timidness,
The pretty miss
Sat down, with Tom's assistance;
Then next her came
A portly dame
Who offered some resistance.

"Oh, mercy me!
Dear, dear!" said she,
With laugh-provoking shiver.
"I'd rather stand
Upon dry land—
I never liked the river!"

"Come, mother dear,
Sit down just here,
And take a sip of sherry.
How stupid thus
To make such fuss
At crossing o'er a ferry!"

"Don't go," said one,
"She'll spoil the fun—
We're safe to have a blunder;
A crown I'll bet
We all shall get
Turned topsy-turvy under."

Digitized by Google

"Oh, do not scold,"
Said Tom: "she's old,
And no doubt rather nervous.
I'm used to this,
My pretty miss,
It's mostly how they serve us.

"I have a boat
That's now afloat,
'Twill hold in number nine;
A pound I'll bet
'Twill not upset,
And do your best at try'n'.

"I'll put you right,
Let come what might—
You trust to me, my dear!"
And Tommy laughed,
The women chaffed,
And vowed they knew no fear.

And now they sail
Thro' Coalbrook Dale,
And loud applause receive;
And naughty Tom—
Mischievous Tom—
Stands laughing in his sleeve.

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For he, the lout,
Knew all about
The faults that boat had in it,
And there stood he
Prepared to see
Them over every minute.

A squeal! a squeal!
They've struck their keel,
And oh, the shouts and halloas,
As now they're borne,
Helpless, forlorn,
Among the reeds and shallows!

"Confound the boat,
Oh, let's get out;
Curse on that wicked boy!"
"Be still, my dear,
It's deep just here!"
Shouts angry Jim Molloy.

"You know full well—
No need to tell—
We can't get out and walk;
So where the deuce
Is any use
In such unmeaning talk?

Digitized by Google

"Just quiet keep!
The stream's not deep—
Now then, back-water! Quick!
That's right, my lad!
Back, back like mad!
I see you know the trick."

With lips pressed tight,
And cheeks grown white,
They're battling for the shore,
When twisted 'neath
A willow wreath,
Poor Charlie drops his oar!

Then shrieks and cries
And yells arise
Which make the stoutest shudder:
Poor luckless elves!
They find themselves
"At sea" without a rudder.

Good boats around
The place abound.
On one stood Tommy Random,
Ready to speed
In case of need
Upon the shore to land 'em.

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The naughty lad!
It's much too bad
Their pleasant trip to spoil;
But safe as sticks
Such roguish tricks
Will soon on him recoil.

"Young man," they shout,
As he pulls out,
"Just take this boat in hand.
On water we
Are all at sea,
So tow us back to land."

And now once more
See them on shore,
But with a score to settle!
They all agree
To wait and see
Young Tom put on his mettle.

They put afloat
A little boat,
And then to stop his shifting,
Like Johnny Sands,
They tie his hands
And send the rascal drifting!

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A fishing smack
Brought Tommy back,
And saw him safely moored;
The party gay
All went their way—
The ruins unexplored.

THE OLD GARDEN GATE.

The twilight shades are deepening, love,
The birds are hushed and still,
There's nothing but the music of
The little murmuring rill;
And my thoughts are wandering back, love,
In gratitude to fate
For that glorious summer evening
By the old garden gate.

When the moon was slyly peeping
'Neath the tall, old poplar trees,
And the whispers of your true love
Were wafted on the breeze,

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It seemed quite accidental,
  But I didn't like to state
That I knew you meant to meet me
  By the old garden gate.

And tho' 'tis many years ago,
  I cannot help but smile—
Recalling the confession
  I expected all the while;
And it seemed to be so early,
  Tho' 'twas really very late,
When you stole a kiss at parting
  By the old garden gate.

My step is slow and feeble,
  And my hair is turning grey,
Old Time has left his traces
  On the face once bright and gay;
But my heart is still as faithful,
  And my love is just as great
As it was that summer evening
  By the old garden gate.

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THE FERN.

THOU charming plant of woody glen,
  Thou pride of well-kept bowers,
Thou guest of springs refreshing dews,
  And summer's scorching hours.

On stony rocks thou mak'st thy home,
  Or on the mountain free,
Or where the rippling brooklet glides
  Smoothly and peacefully.

Or tended by some careful hand,
  Where choicest flowerets grow,
Thou tak'st thy place in gardens fair,
  Thy beauteous charms to show.

And thus content, thou lov'st to dwell
  Where'er thy lot may be:
Garden, or rock, or moor, or fen—
  All find a place for thee.

Digitized by Google

A BIRTHDAY WISH TO MY CHILD.

AN ACROSTIC.

A ROUND thy pathway, little one, may
N o shadows fall;
N o thorns be
I n the roses thou may'st gather! May thy life
E ffulgent be with virtue's brightness!

H ealth, joy, and peace be thine!
O h, may the Grace Divine
W atch daily o'er thee;
A nd may thy history
R ich in all graces be,
D ear child of mine.

TO "LIBERTY" STATUE, NEW YORK.

No form of speech can frame my praise of thee,
Thou glorious pile of mighty Liberty!
The rolling deep may proudly wash thy shore,
And sound thy glorious name for ever more.

Digitized by Google

Sublime thy build, from base to torch's flame,
Fitting tribute to thy splendid name;
A welcome gleam art thou from sea to sea—
All eloquence is dumb at sight of thee.
Hold thou thy sway throughout thy nation's land,
While myriad millions bless thy guiding hand.

THE BLESSINGS OF TOIL.

THERE are three little mouths to be fed,
  And six little feet to be shod;
So out in the fierce winter's wild
  I go with the blessing of God.

With the trust of my Maker at heart,
  I dread not the discipline sent,
But trudge through the mist and the sleet,
  With the sweetness of fullest content.

The three darling lights of my life—
  No matter what dainties I lack—
Make me happy and proud as a queen
  As I carry my load on my back.

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Jack Frost, nipping, eager, and keen,
  Gripping hold of my hands till they burn,
Gives a tone to my healthy physique,
  And a sauce to the supper I earn.

For all is not winter to me,
  My heart beats with warmest delight;
The rays of the sunshine I've left
  Speed my feet for their welcome at night.

The hedges, the trees, and the dells,
  All mingle their voices with mine,
And the stones in the road follow suit
  And blend in a chorus divine.

For winter the spring-time will bring,
  And over the valleys and dells
I see day by day her approach,
  Sweet maiden, with blossom and bells.

Dear Winter, we ne'er bid thee stay,
  But deepest regret does it bring
To watch thy last footsteps away,
  And stand on the threshold of spring.

Thy chaste, pure, and beautiful garb,
  Enfolding the trees and the earth,
Bespangled with diamond dews
  Of filigree jewels thy girth.

Digitized by Google

How tenderly, gracefully soft
  Are the tiniest tendrils drest,
And tall trees like tossing white plumes,—
  Oh, Winter, I love thee the best!

I love the crisp snow on the hills,
  The hedges all trellised with pearls;
I love the bright tinge of thy touch
  On the cheeks of the boys and the girls.

From door unto door do I ply,
  And eagerly offer my wares,
And whether I prosper or fail,
  Why, nobody troubles or cares.

But toil brings its certain reward,
  As patiently onward I roam,
Contented with all when I think
  Of that blest little kingdom called home.

The kettle will sing on the hob,
  The kitten be purring her song,
And they will be waiting for me,
  And thinking each moment is long.

My slippers—I know where they'll be—
  On the rug where my cosy chair stands;
And Clara my supper will bring,
  Prepared by her wee loving hands.

Digitized by Google

Dear Nancy, enduring and staid;
  And Clara, confiding and sweet;
And Jennie, the rollicking puss,
  Are three little scamps at my feet.

Oh, the wealth of the rapture I read
  In their eyes as they look up in mine;
As heart speaks to heart from their depths,
  Aglow with pure love-light they shine.

I envy no lord of the land
  His acres, his silver, and gold;
Give me the sweet, trusting young hearts
  Of the three little darlings I hold.

FRIENDSHIP.

Like cooling wells of water in a desert land,
Like rubies deeply hidden 'neath the golden sand,
Like sweet delicious vintage from the graceful, clustering vine,
Like holy incense rising from every sacred shrine;
Like showers of rain in summer,
Like pearls in the ocean's bed,
Like spangles of dewdrops glittering on the scented violet's head,

Digitized by Google

Like firm and sturdy oaks the ivy doth entwine,
Like the music of silvery waters,
Like the scent of the wild woodbine;
Like a lighthouse to the mariner, as he hails its steadfast light,
Like gentle zephyrs stealing,
Like stars in the vault of night;
Like Arabia's spices and perfumes,
Like blossoms that bloom in the spring,
Like a calm when a storm is over,
Like gems in the crown of a king;
Like clusters of virtues encircled in silk, in purple, and gold,
Like everything graceful and lovely,
Like everything fair to behold;
Like everything pure and holy where beauty and goodness attend—
Like these is the fervent affection, the comforting love of a friend.

TO MORNING.

All hail thou messenger of gladness, hail!
Bedecked with rosy splendour, spread thy sail;
High o'er the lofty peaks exultant roam,
Spanning the darkest chasm of densest gloom;

Digitized by Google

Loosing the grey-tinged mantle of the night,
Lifting the veil and bursting into light!

Far on yon Eastern hills the sun doth rise,
Filling with glory all the vaulted skies;
Gaily the gentle lark awakes thy rays
And carols thee his grateful hymn of praise.

Blissful the transports following in thy train,
Potent the balm thou bringest for life's pain:
Welcome! Oh, welcome then, thou glorious morn,
Messenger of joy and source of hopes unborn!

PUCK.

I WONDER oft, as thro' the streets I trudge,
  And fancies free are thro' my senses stealing,
If other people chance to feel
  The mad impulses I am feeling.

Dame Grundy makes me walk demure and staid,
  And straight as stilts stands stately Dame Propriety;
One mustn't laugh or giggle in the streets
  For fear of vexing prudish Dame Society.

Digitized by Google

I'd like to bang the chains on brewers' drays,
  Snatch straws from trolleys laden trimmed with forage,
Stop harmless cattle for a little fun,
  And fright the horses in my lady's carriage.

I'd like to lark when impulse bids me to,
  And give the passers-by a merry jostle;
To trundle hoop, or else play skipping rope,
  Or have a game at ball or tistle-tostle.

I've often felt inclined to catch the chains
  That hang from lofty warehouses suspended,
And just for once enjoy the pleasant swing
  And leave the ugly bales of wool up-ended.

An urchin meets me with an empty jug,
  My roguish spirit I am bound to smother—
I'd love to smash the pitcher from his hand
  And straightway give him cash to buy another.

On tiptoe stands an eager crowd,
  And all at once my fancy itches,
While they are straining for a look,
  To pitch the gazers in the ditches.

I love a race without a hat,
  A romp through fields in windy weather,
And joyful as the breeze that blows,
  Skip o'er the hills and purple heather.

Digitized by Google

I'd like to scare the ducks and geese,
  And make them run instead of waddle;
To frighten all the cocks and hens,
  And ride my mare without a saddle.

And though I feel myself, and am,
  Most mischievous of living creatures,
I walk demurely through the streets
  Without a smile upon my features!

TO CLARA.

As the sun to the morn and the stars to the night,
So art thou to my life, oh, thou child of my light;
And still, tho' in years thou art twenty-and-three,
Thou art loved just as well as when nursed on my knee.

When thy beautiful form as a babe I caressed,
And lulled with soft murmurs thine eyelids to rest,
How blissful the rapture to gaze on thy charms,
Sleeping peacefully sweet in thy fond mother's arms.

How fleeting the joy, as the years come and glide—
Stealing—silently, surely—thy form from my side;
Yet in patience and love will our hearts beat as one,
And sweet perfumes come wafting from days that are gone.

Digitized by Google

TO SUSIE.

SUSIE's coming: she will bring
Pins and needles, tape and string—
Every one for everything
Asks Susie.

It's Susie here and Susie there,
Susie, Susie everywhere;
Great and small are Susie's care—
Dear Susie!

Hear the riot, hear the rout,
Emily's call or father's shout—
All, whene'er they journey out,
Want Susie.

"Susie, bring my hat and stick;"
"Change my cloak, this one's too thick;"
"Come, I'm waiting, Sue, be quick"—
Run Susie!

Willing hands of Susie sweet
Bring my slippers for my feet,
And my medicine after meat—
Eh, Susie!

Digitized by Google

Oh, Susie, Susie, how should we,
Appreciative tho' we be,
Have half life's pleasures but for thee—
Our Susie.

TRUTH.

I'M here, sitting all alone,
My spangled dress laid by,
Alone with my poor aching heart—
Oh, bitter, mocking joy!

I'm at my best, the eager crowd
Are loudest in my praise;
And one and all their loud applause
Extravagantly raise.

Again, before the curtain gay,
All smiles and grace I'm sent,
With sparkling fun and twinkling jest,
To feed their merriment.

I speak the lines so coveted—
I hear one great encore;
The curtain falls, the lights are out,
And then the concert's o'er.

Digitized by Google

AFTER MANY YEARS.

I KNOW of a room in a palace,
  In a citadel huge and strong—
A kingdom of wonderful grandeur,
  A kingdom of glory and song;
A chamber whose walls are resplendent,
  A chamber of radiance rare;
From fresco and ceiling to basement
  The wealth of all beauty is there.

And down in its deepest recesses,
  Unperceived lie treasures untold;
Not Solomon's riches could offer
  The half of its store of gold.
This chamber, so chaste and so comely,
  Where harmonious melodies roll,
Surpassing the song of the poet,
  Is the temple of love to the soul.

No footfall is heard in its precincts,
  Though thousands assemble around;
No hand shall disturb it or rifle
  Its caskets of secrets profound:
For in this still chamber of rapture
  The sunlight of girlhood shines yet;
My young, loving heart is the tenant,
  Locked in with the key of regret.

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And I feel when the shadows are longest,
  And the sun sinks low in the sky,
Each wave tells the tide is receding
  And sweet compensation is nigh;
Then, then out of great tribulation,
  My voice above others shall swell,
And gladly I'll give up possession,
  And say it is well, it is well!

❀ ❀ ❀

A COACH DRIVE IN THE RAIN TO CHRIST-CHURCH, BOURNEMOUTH.

HEIGHO! Tally ho! Scorning rain, wind, and weather,
We all take our seats on "The Rover" together;
With mirth at high pressure, the young and the fair
And staid married parties contribute their share.

The horses, impatient to show us their mettle,
Eagerly pawing the ground e'er the ladies can settle;
With a crack from the whip, and a sound from the horn,
We start with our spirits as light as the morn.

We are off! We are off, with a wink from the driver,
All in for a spree, I could bet you a fiver;
And a jollier party you never will find—
The wedded in front and the lovers behind.

Digitized by Google

Away thro' the lanes, with the trees hanging o'er us,
And the song of the thrush and the blackbird in chorus;
Down the oak avenue, galloping fast,
Till the famous old Priory's sighted at last.

The driver pulls up—we dismount by the ladder,
And, oh, should we slip, no thought could be sadder!
Terra firma is gained, and Leslie, the imp,
Is laughing at Doctor, who goes with a limp.

Industrious Watson, the tease of society,
Trots off with his Kodak with utmost propriety;
And the ladies—God bless them!—in groups two and three,
Adjourn to a café in search of some tea.

Bombarding the shop with a flit and a flutter,
And vanish the scones and the fresh bread and butter,
And vanish the cream and the dainties galore,
And still the young rascals kept asking for more.

Again in our seats, and the glad sunshine gleaming
Thro' forest and fell is welcomely beaming;
Once more thro' the lanes we are whirling away,
And Bournemouth is reached with a "Hip, hip, hooray!"

Digitized by Google

IMPROMPTU FOR MAGIC POST-OFFICE FOR A GARDEN PARTY.

All candidates for wedded bliss
Pause for a while and look at this:
Hope, despairing one—if there are any—
Love is waiting inside, with Dame Fortune's consent,
With the choicest of choices each one to present—
For the nominal charge of one penny.
Refuse, and your future is clouded and grey,
Your chance of success is uncertain.
Now, don't be denied,
Just a glimpse of your bride
On the opposite side of the curtain.

LIFE'S STORY.

I walk along the shining sands
In hush of night,
And see the work of dimpled hands
When skies were bright;
In miniature, thro' tower and tier,
I see the embryo engineer,
Whose plans in shifting sands appear
A child's delight.

Digitized by Google

The laughing maid that looks so sweet,
With golden hair;
Her skirts pinned up, and naked feet,
Contributes there
The fine instincts of womanhood,
In pies and pudding, rich and good,
Serves up with pebbles, flowers, or wood,
Her dainty fare.

The busy boy, with glowing pride,
Has shaped and made
A fort defying wind and tide,
With penny spade;
The future hero shouts with glee,
And views with healthful energy
His work thought out so perfectly,
So soon to fade.

Sweet little forms tucked up in bed,
And lost in sleep;
Angels around each curly head
Their vigils keep;
And whilst they dream, the sullen sea
Has wave by wave persistently
Laid all their castles hopelessly
A ruined heap.

Digitized by Google

THE SEA.

I COULD sing to thee, ocean, a song,
  I could sob to thee, ocean, my grief,
For the voice of thy sadness finds echo in mine,
  And thy murmuring brings me relief.

With seething and sorrowful dirge,
  Break, break on thy rock-beaten shore,
And the ebony clouds in their arches above
  Shall laugh at thy angry roar.

Thou ridest, a king, in thy caves,
  And vain are the efforts of man—
In the path of thy greatness thou settest at naught
  The mightiest architect's plan.

In thy wrath all are playthings to thee,
  To and fro on thy chariots borne;
Yet the sea-bird shall rest on thy billowy crest,
  And sleep in the lap of the storm.

The loved ones that fall to thy prey,
  With no hand to pity or clasp—
Thou mockest with scorn all their terror and wail,
  Held firm in thy merciless grasp.

Digitized by Google

Trackless thy pathway, unknown,
  Cradled in mystery deep;
Man never may know what is buried below—
  Thy grave will its mystery keep.

Majestic and cruel thy strength,
  Unnumbered thy secrets profound;
In thy cold caverns deep, with their coral and reef,
  Where the gulls chant their sorrowful sound.

Oh, ocean! thy changeable chime
  Brings harmony sweet to my woes;
Thy rage is a rest to my tired, troubled breast,
  And thy calm brings me quiet repose.

GRAVES.

WITHIN thy sacred walls with hallowed step I tread,
And view with silent awe the peaceful, sleeping dead;
Each narrow cell a message holds, as one by one is passed:
Aglow with life, yet this must be my own place at the last.
The vast demands of toilsome life, ambition's lofty aim,
The love of self, the foolish pride, the greed of wealth and
  fame,

Digitized by Google

The discontent, the coveting what ne'er can be our own
Must end in just a strip of ground, a winding-sheet, a
stone!
Ah me! within a little while I too must pass away,
And some one else will look on me as I look here to-day.

THE DISCONTENTED BLACKBIRD.

"I DON'T think it right," said the Blackbird, one day,
To his wife in her nest on the tree;
"Those sparrows down there, tho' it grieves me to say,
Are as greedy as greedy can be.

"The lady who lives in that lovely white house
(Which, of course, we regard as our own),
Comes out every morning—sh, sh! like a mouse:
She's coming, she's coming alone!

"Just peep thro' the leaves, and you'll see for yourself
The dainty provision she brings;
Oh, isn't she charming, the sweet little elf—
An angel without any wings!

Digitized by Google

"Now what I maintain, tho' conceited it sounds,
  But I'm certain with me you'll agree,
That we, being the handsomest birds in the grounds,
  Should have the first pick—do you see?

"Just look at my plumage, and look at my beak,
  How glossy and black is my breast;
I often look round, tho' it's seldom I speak,
  And think of all birds I am best.

"But those ignorant sparrows—brown little dots,
  With the weeniest, weeniest eyes,
Come down like a hurricane out of their cots,
  Their hunger exceeding their size.

"And if I'm not quick, why they'll gobble all up:
  It makes me bad tempered, that's true.
They won't leave a morsel, a bit, or a sup;
  I do think it greedy—don't you?

"The starlings are vexed—tho' they sing very small,
  I know by their looks what they mean;
If I only just mentioned the facts to them all,
  I'm certain they'd kick up a scene."

"My love," said the sweet little wife in the nest,
  "You've got up the wrong side the bed.
I'm shocked beyond measure, it must be confessed,
  As I've listened to all you have said.

Digitized by Google

"I don't mean to say I know better than you,
For that would be very absurd;
Nor yet do I say what you've said is untrue,
You're such a high-principled bird.

"But you should be grateful each moment, my dear,
For all the good things of this life;
For this cosy, warm nest, sweet flowers breathing near,
And for me, your own true little wife.

"Just look at our house; not a bird in the land
Can boast such a mansion as this.
Those poor little sparrows, I quite understand,
How many rich dainties they miss.

"You own to yourself you've a beautiful beak,
Which wonderful business has done
In finding out worms from the lawn's mossy cheek;
Whilst those dear little sparrows have none.

"And I've oftentimes thought, when those savoury bits
You have laid with such pride at my feet,
How much I should like that those fluffy young chits
Could sometimes enjoy such a treat."

"You have said quite sufficient, my darling wee wife.
I am much, very much, in the wrong;
I have spent precious time in the stirring of strife,
Instead of in praise and in song."

Digitized by Google

Then the arbutus bells fairly laughed till they rang,
  The foxglove shook hands with the rose,
And the tall arum lily and columbine sang
  Till the sun had sunk down to repose.

The blackbirds next day had the sparrows to dine,
  The sun shone approval above,
They ate richest fruits, drank choicest of wine,
  And harmony reigned in the grove.

CORONATION ODE.

Lord, all nations bow before Thee,
  In one universal prayer,
That this day Thy choicest blessing
  Rest upon Thy chosen pair.
With Thy holy oil anoint them,
  Grant, O God, that they may be
Mind and body, soul and spirit,
  Consecrated unto Thee.

England's son and Denmark's daughter,
  Crown with truth and righteousness;
Lord, with peace their throne establish,
  All their aim be holiness.

Digitized by Google

King of rulers, Fount of Wisdom,
  Give them from Thy boundless store
Purpose firm, with understanding,
  As Thou didst in days of yore.

Sing! oh sing! ye favoured nations;
  Clasp anew your loyal hands.
Once again swear sweet allegiance
  Where the Flag of England stands.
Sing aloud, with unfurled banners,
  With one voice, with one accord,
Kings and princes, nations, empires—
  Let all people praise the Lord!

MOODS IN MELLS' ROOM.

Closed doors,
  Twinkling eyes,
Pealing laughter,
  Dull care flies.

Easel perched
  Near the light,
Busy fingers,
  Hours bright.

Digitized by Google

Presto work!
  Gone the muse!
Fly the painting,
  Mischief brews.

Roguish Puck
  Pulls the ropes,
Splits the sides,
  Cracks the jokes.

Moment more,
  Wisdom chides;
Scamps all serious,
  Sober-sides.

Faces long,
  Frolic gone,
Bent on Hood
  Or Tennyson.

Cosy fire
  In the grate,
Toes on fender,
  Chocolate.

Boisterous boys,
  Fragrant tea,
Cream of all
  Society.

Digitized by Google

Chatter flows,
  Projects bloom,
All from whispers
  In Mells' room.

TO MY DEAREST FRIEND.

Thy love is to me as a fountain,
  In pressure and heat of the day;
From whose crystalline springs at the cross-roads of life
  I can drink and am cheered by the way.

Thy womanly heart's deep devotion
  Has given me courage to bear,
And burned as a beacon, lest wildly I dashed
  On the cold, cruel rocks of despair.

Sweet sympathy, fleet as an arrow,
  With love-laden succour divine,
Has sped on the wings of an eagle to me,
  Wafting incense at sorrow's dim shrine.

Oh, how can I tell thee the solace
  Thou hast been in the stress and the strife?
Thou hast dried tears of sadness and brought tears of joy
  To those eyes that are light of my life.

Digitized by Google

No chance can have brought thee to me, dear—
God's angels have ordered it so;
And when life's tangled threads are unravelled at last
We shall know, dearest, then we shall know.

God bless thee and keep thee for ever
In the strong tender arms of His love,
Till our friendship unbroken is hallowed for aye,
Cemented in Heaven above.

SHOULD THE SUN FORGET TO RISE.

Lovely maiden, tell to me
What, in thy sweet mind, would be
In this world to happen thee
Direst, worst calamity?

"Oh, my lover, fair and free—
Hero of my life is he:
Should I lose him, that to me
Would be worst calamity."

When thy heart had ceased its pain—
Sunshine follows after rain—
Thou may'st fill his place again;
True love never loved in vain.

Digitized by Google

Valiant warrior, now confess
What for thee means no redress?
What would in the strife and stress
Strip life of its loveliness?

"King and country blaze my fame,
Sing my conquests, shout my name.
Losing that—I die for shame."

Nay, faint heart in coat of mail,
Should this woe perchance assail,
Penitence would thee avail,
Time, the Healer, cannot fail.

Lisping baby, saucy dear,
Whisper, darling, in mine ear.
Life is perfect, love is here:
Is there aught for baby fear?

"With my mother all is bliss,
Joy serene and happiness;
Heaven to me is mother's kiss:
Take her—all is loneliness."

Slumber sweetly, little one,
Tears may fall if mother's gone,
Thou wilt laugh ere setting sun.

Digitized by Google

Grey old miser, cob-webbed o'er
With thy grimy, golden store,
Clench thy teeth and lock thy door,
What dread'st thou at thy heart's core?

"Gold, hard gold, my rising sun;
Gold, hard gold, my skeleton;
Take my gold—I am undone."

Riches are, as thou shalt find,
Dross compared with wealth of mind.
Cleanse thy motives, leave behind
Greed of gold, thy soul to bind.

Youth in morning glory clad,
Wine of strength to make thee glad,
Tell me stripling, earnest lad,
Worst of all to make thee sad?

"Rob me of my health and I
Give up all beneath the sky;
Health in manhood, or I die."

Should thy health through careful lack,
Leave thee off the beaten track,
Patience, thou mayest bring it back.

Digitized by Google

Aged man with hoary hair,
Wrinkled face and vacant stare,
Resting calmly in his chair,
Folded hands as if in prayer.

Gone the fires of youth, thought I,
Still I questioned wonderingly
What is worst calamity?

Sagely the old man replies:
"Worst of all things in my eyes,
Should the sun forget to rise."

TENNYSON'S BOWER.

I KNOW of a nook in a garden green,
  Just fashioned and shaped by the gardener's care,
Where the warm sun beams as he goes to his rest,
  And the scent of flowers fills the languid air.

And high up the wall the ivy green clings,
  And the brown sparrow chirps in the twinkling leaves,
With a sidelong glance of his small, wee head,
  As he guards his brood 'neath the sheltering eaves.

Digitized by Google

You may rock while the soft winds kiss your cheek,
  And the hum of the bees on the breezes float,
And the thrush on the bough your ear shall charm,
  As his song pours forth from his liquid throat.

And the larkspur bows with a courtly grace
  A neighbourly nod as you pass her by,
And the willow-tree weeps when you take your leave,
  With a lonely look and a wistful sigh.

Here, 'neath the rays of sunlight and shade,
  Lovers may linger with whisperings low,
And the birds look down through the trellis brown,
  At blushes of beauty that come and go.

And the fairies shall dance on the rainbow flowers,
  When the purple shades of the twilight fall,
And the moon keep time with a silvery rhyme,
  From her seat in the clouds through the poplars tall.

A poem, a dream is this nook, I ween,
  Peaceful and sweet in the evening hour;
May the gods above look down with love
  While we name the corner "Tennyson's Bower."

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AUTUMN.

LIGHTLY the leaves in the forest are falling,
  Faded yet beautiful, over the ground;
Berries are crimson on hedgerow and meadow,
  And bountiful Autumn with plenty is crowned.

Blithely the horn of the hunter resounding,
  Ringing with gladness o'er moorland and plain,
Telling us summer, bright summer, is waning,
  And biting Jack Frost will be with us again.

Slowly and surely the sun in the heavens
  Shortens his journey from east unto west,
Bidding good-night to the children who gather
  Around the bright fireside to frolic and jest.

Gossamer dews on the bramble and heather
  Sparkle like diamonds trellised with pearls:
Hail to the season when Autumn's crisp breezes
  Bring health to the cheeks of the boys and the girls.

Father, we thank Thee for summer and winter,
  Autumn and spring-time alike will we love,
Striving to live to the honour and glory
  Of God our Creator who reigneth above.

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A DICKY BIRD'S SONG.

A SAUCY young dicky bird sat on a tree,
And looking as roguish as roguish could be,
With a nod and a twinkle as if he would say—
"Verily, verily, life is gay;"
Merrily, merrily trilling his lay,
"Verily, verily, life is gay."

"I wake with the sun, in my cosy, warm nest,
And shake down my feathers and straighten my breast,
Then kissing adieu to my downy young brood,
I fly o'er the meadows in search of their food.
Verily, verily, etc.

"I fly o'er the rivers, I drink from the rills,
The storehouse of Nature my granary fills;
No care ever sullies my song as I soar—
I trust to my Maker, I cannot do more.
Verily, verily, etc.

"The blue heaven above and the green earth below
Are crowded with blessings wherever I go;
In forest, in woodland, or soft, sheltered grove,
I bask in the glory of sunlight and love."
Verily, verily, etc.

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'TIS MORNING.

'Tis morning, 'tis morning, the blackbird awaketh,
  Piping his song to his mate on the tree,
The lark in the heavens is soaring, soaring,
  Trilling his lay to his love on the lea.

Rise, then, arise for the daylight is dawning,
  Lift up your voices in thanks to the skies:
Thanks to our Father, our loving Creator,
  Giver of all things, Wonderful, Wise.

Sing with the flowerets, the birds, and the brooklets—
  Woodland and mountain in chorus take part;
More than all riches thy Maker desireth
  A loving, a grateful, a glad, thankful heart.

Wonderful, wonderful love that He deigneth
  Willing acceptance from units of dust;
Teach us to live to Thy honour and glory,
  Always and ever Thy promises trust.

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PLAY-TIME.

Our lessons are o'er,
  And gaily we sing
And toss the light ball,
  Or merrily swing.
With laughter and mirth
  We hie to the fields
And cull the fair flowers
  That sweet nature yields.

The hills shall resound
  With gladness and song,
As lightly we trip
  And scamper along.
For pleasure is good
  When duty is done;
We welcome with joy
  Our frolic and fun.

Our teachers so kind
  We'll strive to obey,
Be honest and true
  As day follows day;
Then, as the years glide
  On Time's rapid wing,
Our childhood, sweet hours,
  No sorrow will bring.

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TO A. O. K., MIDDLESBROUGH.

I AM four, only four—not old you will say;
But something important has happened to-day,
And I shall remember as long as time goes
The birthday that brought me my first suit of clothes.

I awoke before dawn and began to prepare,
Or just to make sure that the garments were there;
Mother came to my room to be there for the fun,
And whispered so proudly, "I'll dress you, my son."

Then inspection ensued, I was patted and kissed,
Walked forward, then backward, no turning was missed;
My pride you will pardon, impatience excuse:
I felt like the saying, "too big for my shoes."

Father twisted me round with a critical scan,
Saying, "Mother, he really looks just like a man."
Mother clapped both her hands, exclaiming with joy,
"Oh, bless you, my darling, my beautiful boy."

Dear grandmamma laughed, held her head in the air;
"He looks inches taller," said she, "I declare."
Grandpa held up a coin, as he chuckled with glee:
"Let's see if those pockets will hold it," said he.

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"He's simply perfection," my grandmother smiled;
"His father was like him when he was a child,"
As into the depths of those pockets of mine
My grandfather fondly inserted the coin.

How the people all stared, as I walked down the street;
The pavement seemed almost too small for my feet,
And I fancy I heard this remark, "See! there goes
A fine little boy in his first suit of clothes."

MISTRESS MOON.

"Moon, moon, moon,
Beautiful, shimmering, shining moon,
Tell me, tell me, tell me, I pray,
What dost thou see on thy lonely way?"

"Nay, nay, nay,
Sweet little child, thou must not see
Aught of the wonders revealed to me,
Swinging above thee mysteriously."

"Moon, moon, moon,
Wonderful, glistening, radiant moon,
What is thy work on thy nightly march?
Is heaven up there in that cold, high arch?"

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"List, list, list!
Heaven is here and heaven is there,
Heaven is all things pure and fair:
Thy heart is thy heaven if God is there."

"Moon, moon, moon,
Silvery, silent, shadowy moon,
How dost thou feel when thy silent gaze
Is hidden by clouds in a misty maze?"

"Hark, hark, hark!
Maiden, I find it in all things best
To meekly obey Divine behest,
Bearing what is and leaving the rest."

THE LAURELS, LINTHORPE.

TO MRS. S——.

SUNDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 4TH, 1903.

THE shadows are low, and the evening
  Is wrapped in its mantle of grey;
With feelings of sadness mingled with joy
  We welcome the close of the day.

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The supper is past, and the twilight
  Is lost in the gathering gloom,
And the glow of the embers fantastic
  Is the only light of the room.

The blinds are undrawn at the windows,
  The stars peeping in as they please,
And the tall swaying forms of the poplars
  So gracefully bend to the breeze.

And here in the circle assembled,
  Embracing the young and the old,
The morning, the noon, and the evening of life,
  Each holding their treasures untold.

The young with life's pleasures before them,
  The old with their pleasures behind,
Hand-in-hand with the Master, who leadeth
  So lovingly, tenderly, kind.

We sit while the shadows are playing,
  Like guests at a phantom repast,
As out of the casket of memory
  Drop jewels, rich jewels unclasped.

And the tears are loosed at the fountain,
  The heart-strings are bruised and restored,
And the yearning great love of the mother
  Is lost in the trust of her Lord.

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Take courage, dear love, He has brought thee
  Through sorrows which threatened to drown;
His arm will encircle thee surely
  Till Jesus shall give thee thy crown.

TO NORA.

Seas may divide and distance part
  My Nora dear from me,
But ever in this faithful heart
  Her place will always be.

Gloom may enshroud, and tempest beat,
  Whirlwinds around me roar,
A beacon-light her face so sweet
  Shall cheer me evermore.

In crowded haunts, in solitude,
  Nora my star shall be;
My thoughts her own where none intrude
  On our sweet company.

I feel her touch upon my cheek,
  I press her gentle hand,
In mind I hear her sweet lips speak
  The love we understand.

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Oh, Nora mine, my heart is thine,
  Precious art thou to me,
And ever in this faithful shrine
  For aye enthroned will be.

SOLITUDE.

I AM musing alone on the shore, when the daylight and evening meet,
The blue vault of heaven above and the cold restless waves at my feet.

Alone in the desolate night; oh, fitting and pleasant the scene,
Not the sound of a footfall is heard to break on the silence serene.

The moon—silver goddess of light—illumines the seas with her ray,
And tall ships on ocean's smooth breast seem like shadows and phantoms at play.

How gloriously solemn the thought: alone with my Maker I stand,
Who measures the earth with a span and the oceans He holds in His hand.

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Let me with humility pause and look down the river of years;
Frail unit of weakness and sin, to and fro tossed with smiles and with tears.

A reed, yet a vessel of grace, wounded yet healed by His love;
Hungry, yet daily restored, faithful His promises prove.

THE KING IS HEALED.

JULY 1902.

THE angel of gladness passed over the earth,
'Mid darkness—thick darkness and dread—
And hovering over our grief-stricken land,
"What would you?" he tenderly said.

And lo! with one voice the nations replied,
"Oh, give us the life of our King!
Thou herald of comfort, consoler of tears,
What more could we ask Thee to bring?"

The angel of gladness passed over the earth
And touched, as he passed in His train,
Each effort with healing the Monarch to bless,
And England rejoices again.

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A PLEA FOR LIGHT.

OPEN my eyes, dear Lord, that I might see
The perfect way. In love make plain to me
Thy will, and in the darkness hold my hand,
That in the strife I falter not but understand.

Give me that wisdom, Lord, that I might find
All that I need in Thine all-seeing mind;
Keep me each moment leaning on Thy love,
Unshaken by the doctrines my dim sight cannot
prove.

Give me discernment, that I may behold
All that is pure, sifting the dross from gold;
Threading the precious pearls, as one by one
They drop before my feet where truth and light have
shone.

Binding the golden sheaves till harvest-time,
With purpose true, with faith and hope sublime,
Till all the myriad creeds at last shall be
In one grand harmony lost, lost in Thee.

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BE CHEERFUL.

TWIT, twit, twit, twitter, twit, twit,
  Sang Master Sparrow one morning;
Twit, twit, twit, twitter, twit, twit,
  Wake, little child, day is dawning.

Wake, for the lark is aloft
  Thanking his Maker for slumber;
Wake, let your praises ascend,
  Blessings you have without number.

Count all your mercies, my child,
  And never prize them too lightly;
God loves a heart that can sing
  Thankfully, happily, brightly.

Smile when the weather is dry,
  Smile if it's clouded and raining,
Smile when the world is awry,
  Passion and anger disdaining.

Smile if you've only a crust,
  Smile if you're favoured with honey;
In every circumstance be
  Joyous, and smiling, and sunny.

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Twit, twit, twit, twitter, twit, twit,
Sang Master Sparrow so gaily;
Twit, twit, twit, twitter, twit, twit,
This is my gratitude daily.

ON THE OLD YEAR.

THE old year is gone! We may say let him go,
And take in his transit all sorrow and tears;
Let him lock in his storehouse as garments laid by,
All past bitter longings, all hopes and all fears.

Eternity claims all the motives and deeds
He holds in his wallet with record of truth,
And swift as an arrow he tears from our grasp
The last fleeting moments with merciless ruth.

And lo! on the threshold stands wee nineteen-four.
Oh come to our arms, let us cherish thee, sweet;
Let us feed thee with virtue and clothe thee with love,
That thy growth may be vigorous, perfect, complete.

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As day follows day, may we watch thee unfold,
In blossoming beauty blessing thine age,
That reading the record of hale nineteen-four,
No blot may be seen to disfigure the page.

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